

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DS052				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Fonthill Lodge Childcare				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Old Lucan Road, Palmerstown, Dublin 20, Co. Dublin				
<b>Eircode:</b>	D20 PX73				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Conor Lynch and Maurice Lynch				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	30/07/2025				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>49</td> <td>PM</td> <td>50</td> </tr> </table>	AM	49	PM	50
AM	49	PM	50		
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, County Dublin.				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	O Quill and H Sutherland				
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors				

### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Fonthill Lodge Childcare is a private childcare facility and is one of three Services operated by the registered provider. Full day care, part-time care and sessional care and education is provided for children aged 0-6 years of age. A school-aged childcare service also operates from the premises. The hours of operation are between 7.30am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday.

The early years service operates from a purposefully adapted two storey premises in an urban area of southwest Dublin. Nine care rooms are available. This includes seven care rooms on the ground floor for pre-school children and two care rooms on the first floor. One of the rooms on the first floor is used exclusively for the care of school-aged children and the second room is used for children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme in the morning and school age children in the afternoon.

On the day of inspection five care rooms were operating and three care rooms were closed including the Green, Orange and the Bees rooms. A cot room was available within the Nest care room to accommodate the youngest children attending the service. A large enclosed outdoor space was divided into four separate areas to cater for the various age groups. The surface of the outdoor area consisted of both artificial grass and paved areas. A good variety of play materials and equipment were provided in the outdoor area.

### Staffing

In total twenty-six adults are employed in the service including managers and a cook. Nine adults worked directly with children on the day of inspection. Three additional staff provided support in all care rooms as required during the day. The management team were not assigned to care rooms but were also available to provide assistance when required. The registered providers do not work in the service. The general manager arrived during the inspection and attended the closing meeting.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history

- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Compliance was assessed under the following regulations:

9(1)(a), (b), (c), (2) (a)-(d) and (4) Management and Recruitment.

11(1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels.

19(1)(a)(b) Health, welfare and development of child.

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

25 (1), (2) (a) and (b) First Aid

26(1)(a), (b) and (4) Fire Safety Measures.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19(1)(a) and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the following care rooms the Nest, Caterpillar, Owls and Blue room and did not include the Yellow room.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes. The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, general manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
  - (b) The person in charge and a named deputy were always on the premises during the inspection.
  - (c) The service had a clearly documented management structure with staff roles outlined. Adults demonstrated an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the lines of authority within the service.

(2) In total nine new staff were employed since the last inspection on the 3 May 2023. The inspection focused on a review of these staff files and included a review of Garda Vetting for all staff.

(a) Fifteen written validated references were provided from past employers.

(b) Three written validated references were provided from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff members employed in the service. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting had been sourced as required for five adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Records were available evidencing that six staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. Three staff members held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

#### Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. Fifty pre-school children who attended the service were supervised by nine adults.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be on the premises at all times of opening.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

#### Compliance Information

##### Basic Needs:

The inspectors observed appropriate and suitable care practices within the service. Meals and snacks were offered to the children regularly throughout the day. Drinks of water were available within the rooms and outdoor area. Water and milk were offered when children were eating. Younger children were encouraged and assisted to feed themselves. Staff supported the children to manage their personal care and bibs were provided to protect the children's clothes from becoming soiled or wet when eating. Children's hands and faces were cleaned after their meal. Staff sat with the children when they were eating, engaging them in conversation and promoting social skills. This helped create a relaxed atmosphere. Children were given time to eat their meal and additional servings were given to children who requested more.

Children's nappies were changed regularly; staff were observed to engage in warm one to one interaction when providing this care. Older children in the Blue room were encouraged and supported to use the toilet independently.

Children's sleep needs were observed to be met on the day of inspection. There was a designated sleep time in the Nest and Caterpillar room after lunch. Staff reported that they place the children to sleep outside of the scheduled time if they show signs of tiredness. Children in the Nest room slept in cots within their room. Children from the Caterpillar room slept on a mix of low-level beds and floor beds as appropriate to their stage of development. Lighting was dimmed and soft music was played. Children who used soothers for comfort were given these at this time. Staff remained with the children providing reassurance while they settled to sleep.

##### Supporting Relationships:

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care. Staff were observed to intervene promptly for minor disputes between children and use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour. Transitions within the service were managed well. In the Blue room children were given advanced notice to tidy up prior to lunch. In the Nest and Caterpillar rooms the transition from playtime to lunchtime was managed with use of songs and stories. Family photos, children's photos and children's artwork were displayed in the care rooms. Staff reported they communicate daily with parents as they bring and collect their children and a software app is used to communicate and share additional information including meals, sleep nappy changing and activities.

### Physical and Material Environment:

Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials and areas of interest which allowed children freedom to play and explore. Areas of interest included home corners, construction toys, jigsaws, small world toys, and dress up materials. The play resources available to the children were accessible, organised and stored on low level shelving which allowed the children to select and replace items and materials of interest. There was an adequate amount of age-appropriate furniture available in the rooms. Designated cosy areas were provided to allow children to take a break from activities during the day. Staff reported a daily timetable for outdoor play is available in all care rooms. Children were observed to enjoy time in the outdoor area engaging in energetic and imaginary play.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

*A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.*

### Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- The front door to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. A video intercom system was in place to monitor visitors before granting access. The rear outdoor area had a high perimeter wall with fencing and a secured gate.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored out of reach of children. All low level cupboards in the care rooms were fitted with childproof locks.
- Cord blinds were secured and there were no trailing cables or flexes present.

- The kitchen and storage areas were inaccessible to children.

### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- Children's nappies were changed in accordance with infection control procedures.
- Waste was properly managed using pedal-operated bins, ensuring hands-free disposal.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly.

### Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed including obtaining written parent/guardian consent. Detailed records were available of medicines given. These had been signed by the person who gave the medicine and a manager.
- Care plans were available for children with specific medical needs and staff were familiar with them.

### Safe Sleep:

- Staff remained in the rooms at all times when children were sleeping and undertook physical checks of the children at 10-minute intervals. The temperature of the sleep rooms was monitored and recorded by staff and maintained at the correct temperatures.

### Fire Safety:

- Staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire. The fire exits were clear from obstruction and the fire assembly point was signposted.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area a gap in the astro turf surface was causing it to lift posing a potential tripping hazard.
2. In the outdoor area a pipe coming from a wall over the kitchen area was leaking onto the play area used by children posing a potential risk a child may slip.

#### Infection Control:

3. In the Nest room children's hands were not washed prior to eating their lunch posing a potential infection control risk.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The raised astro turf surface was repaired immediately. The mechanism underneath was re-adjusted and the surface is once again flush with the ground to eliminate the tripping hazard. Management have included this area to the garden daily risk assessment.

2. The air conditioning drainage pipe was extended along the wall so water no longer leaks into the children's play area. This directs water away from the playground from the air conditioning unit required for the kitchen. All external drainage and pipework will be reviewed quarterly by the maintenance contractor. Any issues identified will be logged and repaired. Staff have been instructed to cordon off any affected areas temporarily if further leaks occur before repairs.

**Infection Control:**

3. Staff were immediately reminded of the requirement to wash children's hands prior to meals being served. Refresher training on infection control procedures will be carried out in the staff meeting on 16th September 2025.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

Written and photographic evidence.

**Infection Control:**

Written and photographic evidence.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventative actions and supporting evidence submitted by the registered provider was reviewed by the inspector and deemed to meet the Regulatory requirement.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 25 - First aid

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*

*(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*

*(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times.

Evidence provided demonstrated three staff members who were present had current First Aid Responder training certifications. Two of the certificates were valid until 12 December 2026 and one until the 03 May 2027

(2)(a), (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous place on the premises and was available to the children attending the service at all times.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*

*(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*

*(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

*(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 17 July 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the fire equipment and the smoke alarm system had taken place on 03 June 2025.

(4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.